

# The Liveability Framework

## Narration Script

Huon Valley Council | Candidate and Councillor Knowledge Series

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### Slide 1 — Title — The Liveability Framework

Welcome to The Liveability Framework, part of the Huon Valley Council Candidate and Councillor Knowledge Series.

This module is the companion to Strategic Planning. That one covered what Council's plans are and how they fit together. This one covers the model that sits underneath them, and the change in how Council works that it asks for.

Council endorsed the Framework in 2025 as an innovative, community-centred decision-making model, and a new way of working for Council and the community.

### Slide 2 — Before You Begin

The Framework does not replace Council's plans or its governance. It changes how they are made.

Council endorsed it in 2025 as a community-centred decision-making model and a new way of working for Council and the community.

It sits as a foundation to these plans. The companion Strategic Planning module covers the Community Vision, Strategic Plan, Term Plan and Annual Plan. This covers the model that is the lens in which we plan and implement these.

It enhances rather than replaces, improving coordination and integration across existing governance, planning and budgeting frameworks rather than starting again.

And it is still evolving. Council endorsed it noting expressly that it will continue to evolve as better data and feedback are obtained, and as Councillor consideration is sought.

### **Slide 3 — Why It Exists**

The Framework answers two sets of problems, one outside Council and one inside it.

Outside, the challenges are familiar. Evolving community priorities, complex decision-making, cost of living and inflation, housing shortages, and the impacts of a changing climate.

The effect is that Council found it harder to deliver services efficiently and effectively on its own, which flows through to quality of life, wellbeing, and the liveability of places across the Valley. Many of the priorities have complex

Inside, the problem was different. A siloed decision-making and planning culture had produced many well-intended strategies and plans that were not aligned or integrated with each other, nor with the Community Vision, the Strategic Plan or the Term Plan. Many carried resource implications never factored into asset management or financial planning.

So the answer had to do both things at once. Work differently with the community outside, and work differently across departments inside. A framework that did only one would not have addressed the problem.

### **Slide 4 — What Liveability Means**

Liveability is defined as the qualities and characteristics of a place that support wellbeing and quality of life.

It is not one thing. It is broad and complex and means different things to different people, which is exactly why a council cannot decide what it is on the community's behalf.

It varies by place, and the Valley has coastal villages, rural townships and everything between. It varies by person, with younger people often preferring vibrant places and older people quieter ones.

And it changes over time. What makes a place liveable for someone at thirty is not what makes it liveable for that same person at seventy. Given the population projections in the companion module, that is not an abstract point for this Valley.

So the community defines it. The Community Vision 2023 identified the liveability outcomes that matter, organised into ten themes, which the Framework calls domains.

### **Slide 5 — The Framework**

As a conceptual framework it has four elements, and it is built around the community rather than around Council.

At the centre are community centred partnerships. Residents, business owners, ratepayers, workers and visitors. Community organisations, government agencies and academia. And community structures like forums, progress associations, ratepayers' associations and industry groups. When the Framework says community, it means all of that.

Above sits the Community Vision, developed with residents, identifying the liveability outcomes that matter. The Framework keeps everything aligned to it.

Then the two ways. A new way of working, covering decision-making principles, place-based engagement and local data. And a new way of planning, covering core plans and place-based plans alongside the statutory documents.

The pyramid in the companion module shows how the planning levels stack. This one shows what holds them up: the two pillars running up the sides, and community centred partnerships as the base underneath everything.

## **Slide 6 — Decision-Making Principles**

Fifteen decision-making principles guide decisions under the Framework. Rather than reciting all fifteen, they group into four ideas.

How Council relates to the community. Be transparent. Honour First Nations, respecting and incorporating the knowledge, traditions and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples. Stay engaged. Be community-centred. And promote inclusivity, so all have equitable access regardless of background.

How Council reads a place. Be contextual, respecting and enhancing the unique characteristics and identity of places across the Valley, including the balance between rural living and agricultural lifestyle.

How Council weighs a decision. Maintain a future focus. Balance actions across social, economic, natural environment, built environment and cultural capitals. Build resilience. Protect the natural environment. Act proactively. And follow evidence-based practices.

And how Council works with others. Align plans and strategies. Advocate for partnerships. Collaborate across sectors.

Each principle traces back to a source, whether the Community Vision, a Term Priority, the Strategic Plan, the Reconciliation Action Plan or the Priority Reform Program. They are not invented, and that matters when a decision has to be defended.

## **Slide 7 — A New Way of Working**

Two things make those principles operational: how Council engages, and what it measures.

Place-based contemporary engagement brings modern digital tools together with traditional face-to-face engagement, to capture diverse voices and support meaningful participation in shaping the Valley's future. It is a deliberate answer to the limits of traditional methods.

An online platform shares local data and knowledge, and hosts tools that let people engage on place-based issues and projects. That platform is Engage Huon Valley, covered in the Community Engagement module.

On the measuring side sit the liveability domains and indicators. The ten themes from the Community Vision become domains, and indicators assess the current situation as a baseline so progress can actually be tracked.

The data comes from the Community Views and Customer Satisfaction Surveys, real-time socio-economic data, and ongoing engagement. And it is made public through a dashboard visible to employees, the community and partners alike.

## **Slide 8 — A New Way of Planning**

The new way of planning adds two kinds of plan between the statutory documents and delivery.

Core plans bridge the gap between the statutory documents and implementation, giving integrated, future-focused direction on the aspects of life, risks and opportunities that matter most. Deliberately limited to four or five critical areas, over five to ten years.

The proposed examples are a Future Climate and Place Plan, a Future People and Population Plan, the Land Use and Development Strategy, and a Future Economic Wellbeing Plan.

Place-based plans translate those into locally relevant actions. Geographically defined, from neighbourhood plans for larger towns to community plans for smaller settlements, recognising the distinct heritage and character of places across the Valley.

They are deliberately short, one to three years, so they stay agile rather than becoming another document nobody revisits. And there is a two-way relationship: core plans are first informed by the Vision, Strategic Plan and Term Plan, and as the Framework matures they will also influence how those are reviewed.

## **Slide 9 — What It Means for the Community**

Council describes the Framework to the community in four commitments, and they are worth knowing in the community's own words.

Community-focused decisions, based on real evidence and local knowledge. Shared responsibility, because Council works with others rather than alone. Transparency in how Council plans and delivers services. And accountability to community priorities, through the Community Vision.

Underneath those sits the sentence that captures what is actually different. The Framework moves beyond consultation, focusing on building capacity and capability within the community so residents can work alongside Council on what matters most to them.

That distinction is the heart of it. Consultation asks the community what it thinks, then Council goes away and decides. This asks the community to work alongside Council on the problem.

It also carries an obligation. If Council asks people to work alongside it, Council has to be genuinely open to what they produce. A framework that invites participation and then ignores it does more damage than one that never asked.

## Slide 10 — What Makes It Work

The Framework has two enablers, and they are also its two risks. That symmetry is worth noticing.

The first is local data: outcomes-based data reflecting community priorities and local context, to drive evidence-based decisions. The second is place-based contemporary engagement: the tools for sharing that data, accessing information and participating in decisions.

Now the risks, which Council stated openly when it endorsed the Framework. Its success depends on active community participation, and limited engagement or resistance would reduce its effectiveness. That is why the digital engagement platform matters.

And it relies on quality local data. Inaccurate, incomplete or outdated data would compromise evidence-based planning and performance measurement. That is why access to real-time data modules was procured.

Both risks point the same way. The Framework only works if people participate and if the data is good, so the engagement platform and the data subscription are not overheads — they are the two things holding it up.

## Slide 11 — What It Means for a Councillor

The Framework changes what a good decision looks like, and therefore what a councillor should be asking for.

Expect evidence. Ask what local data supports a proposal and what the indicators say about the domain it affects. Following evidence-based practices is one of the principles, so the question is a fair one.

Expect a place. Ask which communities a proposal affects and whether it fits their context. Being contextual is a principle, and a solution designed for Huonville may not suit Dover.

Expect alignment. Ask which Community Vision domain and which term priority a proposal serves. The companion module's traceability test applies here too.

Expect partnership. Ask who else should be at the table, and whether Council should be doing this alone at all. Council delivering everything itself is part of what the Framework was designed to move away from.

And expect to be asked. Council endorsed the Framework noting it will evolve as Councillor consideration is sought. That consideration is part of the role, not an optional extra.

## Slide 12 — Five Things to Remember

Five things to take away.

One. It is a way of working, not another plan. A community-centred decision-making model that enhances Council's existing governance, planning and budgeting frameworks rather than replacing them.

Two. It answers two problems at once. External pressures Council cannot meet on its own, and an internal siloed culture that produced well-intended plans aligned to nothing.

Three. The community defines liveability. Ten domains drawn from the Community Vision, with indicators to set a baseline and track progress over time.

Four. It moves beyond consultation. Building capacity and capability so residents can work alongside Council which obliges Council to be genuinely open to what they produce.

Five. Ask the four questions of anything put in front of you. What does the local data say. Which place does this affect. What does it align to. And who else should be at the table.